

Caroline Russell AM: Letter to Minister for Migration and Citizenship on impact of changes to the Skilled Worker Visa route on TfL workers

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1. Letter to Minister for Migration and Citizenship on impact of changes to the Skilled Worker Visa route on TfL workers

Letter to Mike Tapp, MP and Minister for Migration and Citizenship

16 October 2025

Dear Mike,

Impact of changes to the Skilled Worker Visa route on TfL workers on graduate visas

I am writing to raise my concerns about the changes to Skilled Worker Visas that were introduced by the Government via secondary legislation on 1 July 2025. These changes included raising salary thresholds, which means that as of 22 July 2025 the eligibility for Skilled Worker Visas has been significantly narrowed.

I am particularly worried about the effect of these changes on workers in London already employed on graduate or youth mobility visas by companies that are registered sponsors, such as Transport for London (TfL). Up to 300 TfL employees are on graduate visas and are, without warning, finding themselves unable to transfer to a Skilled Worker Visa as their occupations are no longer eligible or the salary is too low. The result is that these workers are suddenly finding themselves at risk of losing both their jobs and their immigration status within a matter of weeks – in some cases as soon as 7 November.

I raised this issue with the Mayor of London at Mayor's Question Time (MQT) on Thursday 9 October 2025, calling on him to acknowledge the devastating consequences these visa changes are having on TfL workers and to take urgent action. [1]

During my discussion with the Mayor he informed me that the Deputy Mayor for Transport, Seb Dance, has already written to you requesting immediate transitional protections for workers threatened by these new visa changes and a pause in implementation until after the review of shortage occupations.

I am writing to add my voice to his, the workers affected, the RMT, and the many others in support of both these asks, to prevent workers from losing their jobs in the coming weeks and risking irregular visa status or possible deportation. I note that there are already two Early Day Motions put forward by MPs asking the Government to reconsider these changes. [2] [3]

I've heard directly from TfL workers who feel abandoned by a system they trusted. One worker told me he can't sleep at night; he doesn't know what to tell his wife and family. He left everything to come here, and he feels that politics has taken everything from him. Another, expecting her first child, should be filled with joy, but instead she's terrified she will be forced to leave the country before her baby is even born.

These are people who have done everything right, who came to the UK in good faith. They have studied for three years, some have done second degrees, they have paid their overseas tuition fees, they have paid their NHS fees, they have joined TfL on graduate visas to gain necessary experience, with every reason to believe they could transition to a Skilled Worker Visa and continue to build their lives in London. Now they and their families are left in a terrible limbo, children face having to leave their schools while their parents face a devastating change to their dreams and plans.

To change the immigration rules without providing any transitional arrangements for workers on existing multi-year visa pathways is fundamentally unfair and unjust. Effectively, at the eleventh hour the Government has slammed the door on people who have spent four years learning and preparing to take jobs on Skilled Worker Visas

More widely, I'm concerned about the negative impacts these abrupt, cruel and seemingly casually made changes will have on the UK's global reputation as a safe, trustworthy place to come to, to build a career, have a family and contribute to our country.

On behalf of the affected TfL workers – and all the others across the country – I urge you and the Government to immediately pause these reforms to the Skilled Worker Visa route and implement transitional arrangements, at least until a review of all the ramifications by the Migration Advisory Committee is published and considered.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Russell

Green Party Member of the London Assembly

[1] Caroline Russell AM urges Mayor to intervene as more than 200 TfL workers at risk of deportation under sudden visa changes, 9 Oct 2025, www.london.gov.uk/caroline-russell-am-urges-mayor-intervene-more-200-tfl-workers-risk-deportation-under-sudden-visa

[2] Skilled Worker Visa eligibility rules and transport workers, EDM 1883, 10 Sep 2025
<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/64284>

[3] Five-year indefinite leave to remain pathway for Skilled Worker visa holders, EDM 1956, 13 Oct 2025,
<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/64360>

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